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Seventy-third year

Provisional

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New York

President:	Lord Ahmad/Ms. Pierce	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mrs. Cordova Soria
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	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sweden	Mr. Orrenius Skau
	United States of America	Mrs. Haley

Agenda

The situation in Myanmar

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Myanmar

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Bangladesh and Myanmar to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Tegegnework Gettu, Associate Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme; and Ms. Cate Blanchett, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Goodwill Ambassador.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to warmly welcome the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, and now give him the floor.

The Secretary-General: I join representatives today with a heavy heart. The massive refugee emergency that began one year ago in Rakhine state, Myanmar, has become one of the world's worst humanitarian and human rights crises. Last month, I visited Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh and heard stories of horrendous persecution and suffering. One father broke down as he told me how his son was shot dead in front of him, his mother was brutally murdered and his house burned to the ground. He took refuge in a mosque only to be discovered by soldiers, who abused him and burned the Qur'an.

I know that members of the Council heard similar harrowing accounts while on their own visit to the region. In their press statement of 9 May (SC/13331), Council members highlighted the degree to which they were "struck by the scale of the humanitarian crisis" and that they remained "gravely concerned by the current situation". They also reaffirmed the presidential statement of 6 November 2017 (S/PRST/2017/22), in which the Security Council "strongly condemns the widespread violence that has taken place in Rakhine state", and expressed

> "grave concern over reports of human rights violations and abuses in Rakhine state, including by the Myanmar security forces, in particular against persons belonging to the Rohingya community".

One year ago, I immediately condemned the attacks by extremists against the security forces, but such attacks could never justify the disproportionate use of force against civilian populations and the gross human rights violations committed by the Myanmar security forces and their allies. Last September, I sent an official letter to the Council (S/2017/753) urging concerted efforts to prevent further escalation of the crisis in northern Rakhine state. Following my direct engagement with the Myanmar authorities and several initiatives on the ground conducted by the United Nations system, I expressed my concerns regarding the dramatic humanitarian and human rights situations. I emphasized the threats to regional peace and security posed by further degeneration.

As the Council knows, I have also been working to advance a policy of engagement and unified action to encourage positive actions by the Government, help defuse tensions among communities and build confidence and trust. In April I appointed Christine Schraner Burgener as my Special Envoy on Myanmar. She is undertaking a process of broad consultations, including with the Government and military, civil society and women's groups. I appreciate the Council's strong support and welcome Myanmar's positive cooperation with her so far. In June, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Development Programme and the Myanmar authorities finalized the memorandum of understanding that establishes a framework for cooperation to create the conditions for the voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable repatriation of refugees from Bangladesh. The memorandum of understanding is also aimed at helping to create improved and resilient livelihoods for all communities living in Rakhine state.

Of course, that all requires massive investment, not only in reconstruction and development for all communities in one of Myanmar's poorest regions, but also in reconciliation and respect for human rights. I do not yet see the commitment required for that investment to take place. It is clear that conditions have not yet been met for the safe, voluntary, dignified and sustainable return of Rohingya refugees to their places of origin or choice. I ask members of the Security Council to join me in urging the Myanmar authorities to cooperate with the

United Nations and ensure immediate, unimpeded and effective access for its agencies and partners. We must also continue to press for the release of journalists who have been arrested for reporting on this human tragedy.

Access is critical to meeting the enormous needs and allaying the fears of refugees who would like to return home. For the people who remain in Rakhine, it would allow for consultations on quick-impact projects, based on their assessed needs. Those Rohingya who remain in Rakhine continue to face marginalization and discrimination. Many have been cut off from life-saving humanitarian assistance. Some 130,000 Rohingya remain confined in camps, with severe restrictions on their freedom of movement. They have extremely limited access to health, education and other essential services and to ways of making a living. There can be no excuse for delaying the quest for dignified solutions that will allow people to return to their areas of origin in safety and dignity, in line with international standards and human rights. The United Nations remains ready to help develop such a plan. Voluntary relocation along with freedom of movement, an end to segregation and discrimination, inclusive development, the re-establishment of the rule of law and public safety are essential. It is ultimately the responsibility of Myanmar's leaders to demonstrate greater resolve in upholding the principles of equality and non-discrimination, while countering incitement to racial hatred and violence.

Once again, I would like to applaud the tremendous generosity of the Bangladeshi authorities and host communities. But the response to the crisis must be a global one. The international humanitarian appeal for the Rohingya crisis remains significantly underfunded at 33 per cent. Much more must be done to alleviate the very real risks to life from current and impending monsoons. I am grateful to the World Bank and its President, Jim Yong Kim, for mobilizing almost half a billion dollars in grant-based support for Rohingya refugees and host communities. The grant-based assistance approved by the Asian Development Bank is also crucial to meeting medium-term needs and providing assistance for life-saving priorities. Yet, refugees need more access to education and livelihoods to avoid further vulnerability to the risks of trafficking, sexual exploitation and radicalization.

I cannot forget the stories I heard in Cox's Bazar. One distraught woman gestured to a mother cradling her young baby, who was conceived as a result of rape, and told me,

> "We need security in Myanmar and citizenship. And we want justice for what our sisters, our daughters and our mothers have suffered".

Accountability is essential for genuine reconciliation among all ethnic groups and is a prerequisite for regional security and stability. Regrettably, Myanmar has refused to cooperate with United Nations human rights entities and mechanisms, despite repeated calls to do so, including from members of the Council. We have called for different accountability options to be considered. Most recently, very strong concerns have been expressed by the United Nations Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar, appointed by the Human Rights Council. Its report, issued yesterday, found patterns of "gross human rights violations and abuses" (*A/HRC/39/64, para. 100*) committed by the security forces, which it said "undoubtedly amount to the gravest crimes under international law" (*ibid., para. 100*).

I believe the report's findings and recommendations deserve serious consideration by all relevant United Nations bodies. Effective international cooperation will be critical to ensuring that accountability mechanisms are credible, transparent, impartial, independent and comply with Myanmar's obligations under international law.

The Council has issued a strong presidential statement. We also have clear recommendations from the Kofi Annan-led Advisory Commission on Rakhine State as a guiding framework, which takes into account the needs of the victims and address root causes, including discrimination, persecution and the lack of legal status. I would like to take this opportunity to again commend the statesmanship of the late former Secretary-General in Myanmar and elsewhere. But much remains to be done to provide the necessary conditions for peace and justice in Rakhine. As long as a climate of fear and persecution prevails in Rakhine, voluntary returns will not take place.

All communities in Rakhine state are poor and need sustainable and inclusive development, which is also essential for reconciliation and peace. I would add that patterns of violations against ethnic and religious minorities beyond Rakhine must also end if genuine democracy is to take root.

A year has passed. The crisis cannot continue indefinitely. The Council has shown unity in adopting its presidential statement. That unity remains essential if we are to answer clear appeals with action.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I now give the floor to Mr. Gettu.

Mr. Gettu: I am grateful for the opportunity to address the Council.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) continues to share the international community's concerns about the situation in Rakhine state and the plight of the Rohingya people. We fully align ourselves with the view that there is a need to create the conditions for the voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable return of refugees from Bangladesh, as foreseen in the memorandum of understanding signed by the Government of Myanmar, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Development Programme.

Myanmar faces multiple transitions today regarding the ongoing peace process, economic liberalization and democratic reforms. It is within that context that the root causes of inequality and discrimination against the Rohingya population need to be addressed. Competition for land and resources in Rakhine, which is the second-poorest state in the country, discriminatory laws and institutions, as well as intercommunal mistrust and tensions, contribute to some of those root causes.

Creating sustainable conditions for voluntary returns requires comprehensive and durable solutions. Addressing the significant development challenges of all communities in Rakhine and removing local orders that restrict the freedom of movement and access to basic services are critical in creating such conditions. It also requires that every refugee has the freedom to decide when to return based on a free and informed choice.

Dealing with those issues may also go a long way towards building greater intercommunal confidence and trust among the people of Rakhine state. As noted by the Secretary-General, the recommendations of the Rakhine Advisory Commission provide a road map for addressing those issues. Recently, the Government of Myanmar convened the United Nations system to take stock of the implementation of those recommendations, which was a positive step.

As a first step towards creating conditions conducive for voluntary returns to Rakhine state, UNDP and UNHCR have been working closely to begin the implementation of the tripartite memorandum of understanding. We have reinforced our capacity on the ground to begin that important work. We have also jointly held a range of preparatory consultations with the Government of Myanmar at all levels, including the technical working group set up by the Government to support the implementation of the memorandum of understanding.

In early July, we jointly undertook a first visit, albeit symbolic, to the northern part of Rakhine, which was followed by a joint familiarization field visit with the technical working group later that month. We welcome those preliminary measures taken by Myanmar and look forward to moving ahead constructively and meaningfully. However, effective access and streamlined procedures are essential for us to access entire village tracts and undertake area-based programmes that are inclusive, in line with conflict-sensitive methods, and that build social cohesion. That remains outstanding.

Free and independent consultations with all communities to identify their needs is a necessary step to design and deliver community-based, quick-impact projects that address livelihoods and basic needs to build trust within and between communities. They also lay the foundation for planning longer-term sustainable development, as foreseen in the memorandum of understanding. That, together with freedom of movement and a pathway to citizenship, will be critical benchmarks that must be achieved.

In addition to the memorandum of understanding implementation, UNDP, UNHCR and several other United Nations agencies have been working in other parts of Rakhine state to implement wide-ranging development and humanitarian assistance initiatives, with major donor support. Part of the broader solution in Rakhine lies in tackling some very challenging issues in addition to the issue of freedom of movement, such as access to livelihoods, education and health services; respect for the rule of law; and respecting, promoting and protecting human rights. UNDP is currently helping to address some of those challenges through support for resilience-based recovery and sustainable development.

We would like to acknowledge the Government of Bangladesh for its generous hospitality and support to

the Rohingya refugees. As anticipated, the monsoon, coupled with the limited resources made available to the United Nations and its partners to meet the needs of refugees and host communities, have made the living conditions for refugees in Cox's Bazar very precarious. Creating conditions conducive for voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable returns to Myanmar is a process that requires at least medium-term planning. Continuing to address the needs of all those affected in Cox's Bazar is of primary importance.

In conclusion, we wish to underline the importance of pursuing a comprehensive and durable solution, with effective access, freedom of movement and a pathway to citizenship being critical building blocks for the sustainable development of Rakhine state. We reiterate our strong commitment and continued constructive engagement with the Governments of Myanmar and Bangladesh in creating an environment where people of all communities can live together.

The President: I thank Mr. Gettu for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Blanchett.

Ms. Blanchett: I am honoured by this opportunity to address the Security Council at this critical juncture. I am not here as an expert. I stand before members of the Security Council merely as a witness, as someone who has seen and cannot look away. I went to Bangladesh last March as a Goodwill Ambassador of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to see what I could possibly contribute in response to the massive humanitarian needs unfolding there. Nothing could have prepared me for the extent and depth of suffering I saw.

An 18-year-old woman, whom I will call Laila, is chief among my memories. One of the 720,000 stateless Rohingya refugees who fled violence and abuse in Myanmar's Rahkine state since last August, Laila fled her burning village with her infant son, Yousuf. As she cradled Yousuf in her arms, she described to me how her husband was forcibly taken from her village and has not been heard from since. She also described how, five days later, those same people returned, setting fire to her home and forcing her to flee alone with her baby. She saw her uncle killed by men with knives. She told me: "When I saw that, I just ran". She and her son hid in a forest for months, surviving off plants and trees. Her harrowing journey ended in Bangladesh, where her present hardship persists.

Another refugee family took her and Yousuf in, sharing their cramped shelter. As I sat with Laila, a small child played behind me. I noticed terrible scars on his leg. When I asked how he came by those, his family told me he had been caught in the flames when their home had been torched. Luckily, they pulled him free, but the scars will remain — both the physical and the psychological.

If only such stories were atypical. But, visiting with refugee families in Bangladesh, I found that they were shockingly routine. Like those present, I have heard the gut-wrenching accounts — stories of grave torture, women brutally violated, people whose loved ones have been killed before their eyes and children who have seen their grandparents locked in houses that were set alight.

I am a mother, and I saw my own children in the eyes of every single refugee child whom I met. I saw myself in every parent. How can any mother endure seeing her child thrown into a fire? Their experiences will never leave me. That is why I am immensely grateful that the Security Council — the principle body responsible for maintaining international peace and security — is working in unison to resolve that crisis.

I am particularly thankful to the Secretary-General for giving voice to the Rohingya over the last decade and for continuing to demonstrate exemplary leadership on the matter. I must also pay homage to the former Secretary-General, the late Mr. Kofi Annan, who gave us a clear and practical vision to resolve the crisis in Rakhine state — a vision that is shared by the Council and one which the Government of Myanmar has committed to implementing. It is a vision that, if realized, will ensure that women, men and children of different religions, ethnicities and backgrounds in Rakhine state can thrive collectively. But as the Council and the United Nations work with the Government of Myanmar to ensure that, urgent efforts are still needed for the Rohingya in Bangladesh.

It is important to recall that this is not the first wave of massive forced displacement of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar to Bangladesh in the past 40 years. The scale of displacement is so large and severe that today there are more Rohingya living in exile than in Myanmar itself. In 1978, 200,000 Rohingya refugees streamed into Bangladesh, fleeing brutality and widespread abuse. Gul Zahar, at the time, a young Rohingya woman, was among those who fled. Fourteen years later, in

1992, another wave of violence forced 250,000 stateless Rohingya refugees to seek safety in neighbouring Bangladesh. Once again, Gul Zahar was among those who fled. There are today 900,000 stateless Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. Gul Zahar, now 90-years-old, is sadly among them. Four decades following her initial flight, Gul lives in abject poverty in Bangladesh with the sole wish that her great grandchildren will have a better future. The need for such a future to transpire inside Myanmar has never been more urgent. If we fail to act now, Gul's grandchildren, like thousands of others, will be unable to escape the relentless cycle that generations of Rohingya have experienced.

Bangladesh's recent response — receiving more than 700,000 refugees in a matter of months and providing them safety — is one of the most visible and significant gestures of humanity in our time, but the needs are vast and the suffering acute. Much more international support is needed. Thanks to the efforts of the Bangladeshi Government, the host communities, relevant United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and the refugees themselves, lifesaving efforts have ensured that the Rohingya refugees have endured the monsoons largely unscathed. Yet, as Council members saw for themselves, they continue to live in squalid conditions. With only 33 per cent of the refugee operation funded — amounting to less than 70 cents per person per day — that is not surprising. Rather, it is quite embarrassing. Many Bangladeshi villagers living nearby, with very little to call their own, have been helping the Rohingya refugees over the past year. If people with so little can step up, why can we not do better? Refugees need to feed their families. They need clean water and sanitation facilities to wash, cook and clean. They need a secure shelter to weather the monsoons and the heat. Their children need an education. Their grandparents need to be cared for. But they need more than just food and water, informal schools and temporary shelter. They need a future.

In the refugee settlements of Bangladesh today, women who were raped in Myanmar are now giving birth to children. Those children, already burdened by statelessness, are likely to carry that stigma for the rest of their lives. Many women like Laila, along with their children, continue to be vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. Many continue to battle the scars of trauma and injury, which they received before and during their flight to Bangladesh. It is imperative that Governments, development and humanitarian agencies, the private sector and individuals work in solidarity to find innovative ways to help the refugees and the Bangladeshi host communities.

The focus of our efforts must be to provide much-needed support inside Bangladesh, while working to ensure that conditions in Myanmar are conducive to returns. The many refugees with whom I spoke consider Myanmar their home, but they have real, deep fears about returning there. The denial of their right to move, their right to marry, their right to work and their right to health care and education renders them among the most vulnerable people on the planet. Refugees move back home when it is safe and secure to do so. The Rohingya cannot return to the very conditions they were forced to flee. They cannot settle for half solutions. They must know that they belong. A clear pathway to full citizenship is essential. This is not a luxury. This is not a privilege. This is a basic right that all of us here enjoy, which the Rohingya do not.

I implore the Council not to forget this imperative, support all efforts to make it a reality and, in the meantime, encourage more robust international support needed to meet urgent and pressing needs within Bangladesh. My mind often returns to Laila and her neighbours. Did she find out what happened to her husband? Did her shared temporary shelter survive the monsoons? Did she manage to celebrate Eid al-Fitr last week? Will her young son Yousuf be able to return home to Myanmar and go to school one day? Or, like Gul Zahar, will he too suffer an endless cycle of fear and forced displacement?

Together, we need to change the future of Laila, Yousuf, Gul Zahar and of the Rohingya living in Myanmar, Bangladesh and beyond. There are no short cuts. There are no alternatives. We have failed the Rohingya before. Please, let us not fail them again.

The President: I thank Ms. Blanchett for her very poignant and moving briefing.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the Minister of State for the Commonwealth and the United Nations of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The plight of the Rohingya community is one of the largest refugee crises in recent history, and it is one of the most pressing humanitarian and human rights crises facing the Security Council today. One year since the Rohingya population of Rakhine state

was subjected to a campaign of the most truly horrific violence, resulting in grave violations of their human rights and expulsion and deportation from their homes, the Council has a duty to ensure that they receive justice and the prospect of a peaceful future. The report of the Independent International Fact-finding Mission on Myanmar (A/HRC/39/64) issued yesterday by the Human Rights Council is the most authoritative account to date of the crimes committed against the Rohingya community. The report details widespread rape and murder committed by the Burmese military, the systemic oppression and persecution they have suffered for many years, and the patterns of violence and violations committed elsewhere in the country.

The Council is charged by the international community with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Crimes against humanity, such as those detailed in the Fact-Finding Mission's report, threaten international peace. They threaten international security. Forced deportations across borders, such as those that the Rohingya suffered crossing into Bangladesh, are unfriendly acts, but they also threaten international peace and security. It is therefore incumbent upon the Council that it consider the report in depth, once the Fact-Finding Mission has made its final presentation to the Human Rights Council in September.

But let us be clear: those most affected by the crisis now reside in Bangladesh. As we already heard, with more than 700,000 Rohingya refugees joining more than 300,000 displaced people in previous rounds of violence, Bangladesh, together with the United Nations and other humanitarian organizations, has saved many thousands of lives. Bangladesh, working together with the United Nations and international non-governmental organizations, has taken significant steps to mitigate the worst effects of the monsoon season in recent months. And as we already heard — indeed, so movingly from Ms. Blanchett — the Rohingya need our continued support. Their needs range from food, shelter and clean water, to education, livelihoods and specialized assistance. We must not forget that they need specialized support and assistance for the victims of sexual violence. The United Nations joint response plan remains desperately underfunded, and it is imperative that we all step up and play our part.

But the solution to the crisis — let us be clear — lies in Burma. The Rohingya community deserves justice. The Fact-Finding Mission has concluded that what happened in Rakhine last year warrants

> "the investigation and prosecution of senior officials in the Tatmadaw chain of command, so that a competent court can determine their liability for genocide in relation to the situation in Rakhine State." (*A/HRC/39/64, para. 87*)

With so much at stake, it is the Council that has a duty to ensure that there is no impunity for such acts.

As Prime Minister Teresa May's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict, let me assure the Council, let me assure Rohingya community: this is a key priority for our Government, for our Prime Minister and for myself. The Rohingya must be able to return home to Rakhine safely, voluntarily and, importantly, with dignity. That means more than returning to internally displaced persons camps on the Burmese side of the border, but real progress towards a more just long-term solution and state of affairs in Rakhine.

As a result of the Council's concerted action, though, we have seen some steps forward. The Burmese Government has engaged with the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Ms. Christine Schraner Burgener, whose diplomatic work we support. It has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It has established a commission of inquiry to look into reports of human rights violations. Those steps are welcome. They have not been easy for the civilian Government, whose action remains constrained by the military, but more needs to be done. The steps taken are not enough. The Burmese authorities need to provide UNHCR and UNDP unconditional and unqualified access to northern Rakhine. Until those United Nations agencies can operate effectively, it is impossible to argue that conditions in Rakhine are anywhere near what is required for the safe, voluntary and dignified repatriation that the Council has called for.

There is an urgent need for domestic acceptance and accountability in Burma. It is essential that the Burmese Government set out how its commission of inquiry will be able to investigate those crimes with full impartiality, how it will access United Nations information and how it will be linked to a judicial process to hold accountable those responsible — and let us be clear: particularly those in the military. It is

far from clear that any mechanism established by the Burmese authorities can do that, which is why the United Kingdom supports keeping open the option of justice delivered through international mechanisms.

We need to see practical progress on implementing the Rakhine Advisory Commission's recommendations. That includes recommendations on economic development, which are part of the solution, but it also includes those related to the rights of the Rohingya, including a pathway to citizenship. Those recommendations taken comprehensively, as they were set out by the revered and respected late Kofi Annan, remain the best blueprint for a long-term solution in Rakhine.

What does it mean for us? What does it mean for the Security Council? It means, in our view, that the Council should do three things. First, it should continue to assist Bangladesh and the United Nations in providing protection and assistance to the Rohingya population and their host communities. Secondly, it should take concerted action to push for justice and the prospect of a peaceful future, which the Rohingya community deserves. That includes holding a serious discussion on the conclusions of the Fact-Finding Mission's report. Thirdly, it should support those in Burma who are pushing for progress. But we should also be prepared to use the full range of tools at the Council's disposal to apply pressure against those, including the Burmese military, who obstruct it. The United Kingdom has done that within the European Union, where we have sanctioned seven senior Burmese military officials.

But we all accept that this crisis is complex and has deep roots. It will not be solved overnight. But let us also be clear: it will not be solved without continued engagement and action from the Council. As we mark one year on from the violence of August 2017, therefore, the Council should shoulder its responsibility and do justice to the gravity of the attacks on the Rohingya community. We should not be just discussing and debating. We need to be acting, acting to bring an end to the appalling ethnic cleansing, to help those suffering refugees and bring justice for the victims of those appalling crimes.

I appeal to all fellow members. Let us put aside our differences. Let us act on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and on our obligations in front of us. Let us act in the interests of Leila, in the interests of Yousef and in the interests of tens of thousands of Leilas and Yousefs. Let us act for the sake of humankind.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

Mrs. Gueguen (France) (*spoke in French*): Allow me, first of all, to warmly thank you, Mr. President, for having taken the initiative of convening this meeting almost a year to the day after the beginning of the crisis in Rakhine state. I would also like to commend the personal commitment of the Secretary-General in drawing attention to and mobilizing international action to be taken on behalf of this tragedy. I would also like to warmly thank the Goodwill Ambassador for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Ms. Cate Blanchett, and Assistant Secretary-General Tegegnework Gettu for their briefings on this situation, which deserves the continued and resolute attention of the Security Council.

Almost a year ago, before the General Assembly, the President of France denounced the ethnic cleansing suffered by the Rohingya (see A/72/PV.4). Since then, France has consistently stressed its concern about the serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed in an organized, coordinated and systematic manner in Rakhine state. I would like to make three observations today.

First, commitments have been made by the Burmese authorities and must now be fully implemented. While those are first steps that should be encouraged, the progress seen on the ground remains very limited and is not commensurate with the scale and gravity of the violations of human rights and international humanitarian law that have been committed. In that regard, France is very concerned by the conclusions of the advance version of the report of the Human Rights Council's Independent International Fact-Finding Mission in Myanmar (A/HRC/39/64), according to which the Burmese army could be accused of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, which fall within the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court. France calls on the international community to undertake determined action to collect and protect evidence, and to ensure that those responsible for the crimes committed against the Rohingya population be brought to justice.

France also reiterates its call on the Burmese authorities to cooperate with the Special Rapporteur and the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission. We have

taken note of Burma's establishment of a commission of inquiry on human rights violations. However, at this stage, we have no information guaranteeing the independence or the impartiality of that mechanism, or on the protection provided to witnesses. We also condemn the serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed against children. We hope that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Mrs. Virginia Gamba de Potgieter, who recently visited the country, will soon be able to brief the Council on her mission and provide it with an update.

We also welcome the conclusion in June of a memorandum of understanding with the United Nations Development Programme and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, which is an essential step to enable the voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable return of Rohingya refugees when the time comes. Nonetheless, we are concerned about ongoing restrictions of access. Only unimpeded access to all affected villages and communities will allow us to determine whether the conditions for such returns have been met.

With regard to the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, led by the late Secretary-General Kofi Annan, figures are regularly put forward by the Burmese authorities, but we have very little concrete information on how the measures are actually being implemented. France reiterates in particular the importance of the recommendations related to the issue of citizenship, revising the 1982 law and ensuring equal rights for all members of the Rohingya community. We also support the recommendations concerning the freedom of movement, media access and socioeconomic development in Rakhine state.

Secondly, I would like to focus briefly on the humanitarian dimension of the crisis. France, both in its national capacity and within the European Union, is providing support to Bangladesh, which continues to host on its territory, with admirable generosity, almost 1 million Rohingya refugees living in particularly precarious conditions. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and all of the humanitarian organizations and United Nations agencies concerned have done outstanding work. The international community must continue to support Bangladesh and humanitarian agencies in accordance with three priorities: first, by increasing its contributions to the United Nations humanitarian response plan, which is currently funded at only 33 per cent; secondly, by continuing to take the measures necessary to protect the Rohingya people from security and health risks in camps; and, thirdly, by continuing to support Bangladesh, humanitarian actors and local host populations to make the living conditions of the Rohingya refugees as sustainable as possible, while preserving Bangladesh's national prospects for economic development. Special attention must be paid to the needs of children, particularly with regard to education, and to the needs of women who have suffered untold violence. I still think about the images and testimonies of the women whom we met during our visit last spring to Cox's Bazar.

My final point is that the Security Council and the international community must remain fully committed to ensuring close monitoring of the full implementation of November's presidential statement (S/PRST/2017/22) and of the tripartite agreement concluded among Burma's civilian Government, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Development Programme regarding the return of refugees.

The response to the tragedy of the Rohingya requires addressing the root causes of the crisis. It also requires justice to be done. The Council had an opportunity several weeks ago to thoroughly exchange views with the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Ms. Christine Schraner Burgener, and to express to her its full support in the discharge of her duties. We encourage the Burmese authorities to continue to collaborate closely with the Special Envoy in order to arrive at a lasting solution. The week of high-level general debate of the General Assembly, to be held next month, will also be an opportunity to pursue mobilization. In the absence of tangible progress on the ground over the coming weeks, we will need to carefully consider what new steps the Council could take to respond to the Rohingya refugee crisis.

Mr. Orrenius Skau (Sweden): Halabja 1988, Srebrenica 1995, Darfur 2003. The list of examples in modern history where violence has triumphed is long, too long. Regrettably, it seems a new name will now be added to that tragic list: Rakhine 2017. The reports of systematic and widespread human rights violations and abuses against the Rohingya community in Rakhine state, as well as other gross violations of international law committed in Kachin and Shan states, cannot be neglected. We have seen clear indications of crimes

against humanity. Horrifying testimonies of torture and inhumane treatment, rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence, summary and arbitrary killings, have left no one untouched.

Let me thank you, Mr. President, for having called this meeting, marking one year since the violence in Rakhine began to escalate. Let me also thank the Secretary General for his strong statement, as well as for his personal commitment and engagement. We also recognize Ms. Cate Blanchett's important contribution to mobilizing needed support and attention.

Sweden has actively contributed to the Security Council's engagement on Myanmar since the first day of our membership. Some steps to address the situation have been taken — in November 2017, a united Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2017/22) setting out a plan for action; in March this year, the Council paid a successful visit to the region to gain a first-hand understanding and convey clear messages; and in April, a United Nations Special Envoy was appointed with strong political support for her mandate. But clearly that was not enough. We need to ask ourselves what more we could have done to prevent these atrocities from happening in the first place. Honest lessons must be drawn for future efforts to ensure that it never happens again.

Yesterday, the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar, a United Nations-mandated body with distinguished membership, presented credible and solid findings on the gravity of the atrocities committed by the Myanmar security forces. This is significant and must be followed by meaningful action. The Chair of the Fact-Finding Mission should be given an opportunity to present the report (A/HRC/39/64) to the Security Council as soon as possible. In that regard, we recall the letter circulated to the Council in July, during the Swedish presidency, proposing that the Fact-Finding Mission present its findings and recommendations to the Council.

Several initiatives by the Myanmar Government to meet repeated demands for accountability have been announced, but they have regrettably all proven to fall short of expectations. With facts now having been established, the international community must shoulder its responsibility and act on accountability. Sweden has previously called for the Council to consider a referral of the situation to the International Criminal Court. In the light of the Fact Finding Mission's report, we believe it is time to move forward, and we need to consult among Council members on a draft resolution to that end. At the same time, we should continue to work in other international bodies to ensure the establishment of an international mechanism for full and independent investigations.

In addition to ensuring accountability, there are several other matters that the Council already has agreed upon that also need to be urgently addressed.

First, responses to the humanitarian needs of the refugees in Cox's Bazar must be stepped up. We commend efforts by Bangladesh. Substantially increased financial support, however, is also needed for bolstering resilience. In that regard, we welcome the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank's recent engagement. Protection in the refugee camps, not least for the most vulnerable, must be improved. Special attention should be given to survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, be they women, girls or boys. More secure land must be provided and general security in the camps must be improved.

Secondly, the continuously dire situation in Rakhine also needs to be addressed. Full access to Rakhine for United Nations agencies, as well as for non-governmental organizations and the media, is urgent and necessary. The tripartite memorandum of understanding signed with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Development Programme must be implemented in full and without delay.

Thirdly, conditions for voluntary, safe and dignified returns to areas of origin must be ensured. In that regard, the implementation of the recommendations of the report of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, led by the late Kofi Annan, must be stepped up to address the root causes, including the issue of citizenship. Security, reconstruction and livelihood programmes must also be urgently provided for.

Reflecting on one of the major tragedies in recent times, the late former Secretary-General Kofi Annan noted with regret that "in their greatest hour of need, the world failed the people of Rwanda". The Council cannot turn a blind eye to the atrocities committed against the Rohingya. We must now take full responsibility and do our utmost to end this nightmare. History will not look kindly upon those who fail to do so.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank the Secretary-General, Ms. Blanchett and Mr. Gettu for their briefings on the situation in Myanmar.

For our part, we consistently advocate a balanced and non-confrontational approach when discussing the situation in this country and when looking for ways to normalize the situation in Rakhine state, including when dealing with the issue of refugees. We note the orderly work being done by the country's authorities to implement the recommendations of the Kofi Annan-led Advisory Commission's on Rakhine state to find a comprehensive solution to the crisis. To date, 81 of the 88 recommendations have been fulfilled.

We welcome Myanmar's repeatedly confirmed official readiness to ensure the phased return of all refugees and displaced persons, including from Bangladesh. We greatly appreciate the measures carried out in Rakhine state to establish the necessary infrastructure to receive and accommodate future migrants. We note the establishment, on 30 July, of an independent commission of inquiry, which is headed by and includes authoritative foreign representatives, such as Rosario Manalo and Kenzo Oshima. That decision was adopted in Naypyidaw as part of a national initiative to guarantee reconciliation, peace, stability and development in Rakhine state.

We are convinced that the key to resolving the issue of refugees is bilateral cooperation between Myanmar and Bangladesh. A legal agreement struck between both parties and existing coordination mechanisms that will allow them to move to practical steps to that end. We believe that it would be counterproductive to decide to extend the deadlines for the repatriation process, which is being used by some external forces to put additional pressure on Myanmar.

At this stage, we think that the priority is to establish international assistance in order to overcome the most serious humanitarian elements of the crisis. In that regard, we believe that it is necessary to assist both Bangladesh and Myanmar. Our efforts underline the need to assist both sides equally. In 2018 and 2019, the Russian Federation will allocate $1 million to the two countries through the World Food Programme.

We believe that the role of the international community should also include helping Naypyidaw and Dhaka to implement the agreements that they have already made. In that regard, a positive example is the close cooperation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Development Programme with the Government of Myanmar on implementing the 6 June tripartite memorandum of understanding on cooperation, as well as the activities of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Ms. Christine Schraner Burgener, who visited the country in June and July this year to participate in the Union Peace Conference. We also note the decision of the Myanmar authorities to agree to her opening an office in Naypyidaw.

We believe the issues in Rakhine state to be among a number of serious challenges facing the democratically elected authorities in Myanmar. Attempts to assign responsibility to Naypyidaw for resolving the crisis disregard the terrorist attacks that have exacerbated the crisis Rakhine state and made it more difficult to establish sustainable inter-ethnic peace in the country and to ensure effective cooperation with the international community.

We believe that the key to resolving the problem in Rakhine state is to establish bilateral dialogue and restore trust between Bangladesh and Myanmar. We therefore welcome any contact between the two sides, including the ministerial-level meeting in Naypyidaw on 10 August, at which agreements were reached on the modalities for the eventual return of refugees to Rakhine state and for strengthening cooperation on combating terrorism and drug trafficking.

As we have already said, we believe that the crisis should be resolved primarily on a bilateral basis through negotiations between Myanmar and Bangladesh. The deep-seated problems in Rakhine are multifaceted and complex and can be resolved only through peaceful diplomatic and political means and by establishing dialogue between the authorities of Naypyidaw and Dhaka, including representatives of all ethnicities and religions. We believe that assistance to the Governments of Myanmar and Bangladesh in resolving the issues around Rakhine state should be provided in a spirit of equality and mutual respect. We hope that all parties will act responsibly and with restraint in order to prevent the situation from escalating once again.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China welcomes you, Sir, presiding over this open briefing. We thank Secretary-General Guterres and Mr. Gettu, Associate Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), for their

briefings. China listened carefully to the presentation by Ms. Blanchett, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Goodwill Ambassador.

Recently, with the concerted efforts of the countries concerned, countries of the region and United Nations agencies, there have been some positive developments in resolving the issue of Myanmar's Rakhine state. In early August, Bangladesh and Myanmar held a ministerial meeting to discuss the implementation of the bilateral repatriation agreement. Consensus was achieved on issues such as verification forms, displaced persons in the border area and the establishment of a hotline between ministers. Currently, Myanmar is ready to receive those who fled to Bangladesh.

Myanmar and Bangladesh received visits from Special Envoy on Myanmar Ms. Burgener and held in-depth exchanges with her on the Rakhine issue. Myanmar agreed to the Special Envoy's regional office being headquartered in Naypyidaw. The office is already in operation. The Myanmar Government signed a memorandum of understanding with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and UNDP. The three parties held two joint working group meetings and are preparing for a joint field visit. Recently, the Myanmar Government also received visits from officials of UNHCR, UNDP, the International Organization for Migration and the World Bank.

The Government and the local people of Bangladesh have maintained their massive humanitarian support to the displaced people in Bangladesh and striven to improve their living conditions and to make proper arrangements to deal with the impacts of the rainy season and hurricanes. Myanmar established the broadly representative independent Advisory Commission on Rakhine State and agreed to its terms of reference. The Commission has already started its work. The Myanmar Government is actively implementing the recommendations of the Advisory Commission.

Both Myanmar and Bangladesh are friendly neighbours of China. China has always actively engaged with both countries to find a solution to the Rakhine issue through bilateral dialogue and consultations between the two countries. In late June, State Counsellor and Foreign Minister of China Mr. Wang Yi held an informal meeting with the visiting Bangladesh Foreign Minister, Mr. Ali, and the Minister for the Office of the State Counsellor of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Mr. U Kyaw Tint Swe. On the basis of the three-phase solution proposed by China last year — comprising a cessation of hostilities, repatriation and development — they reached a four-point principled common understanding on the proper settlement of the Rakhine issue.

First, efforts should be continued in line with the three-phase proposal of cessation of hostilities, repatriation and development towards a rapid improvement of the situation in Rakhine state. On that basis, Myanmar and Bangladesh should find a proper solution through bilateral consultations. That would serve the fundamental interests of both countries and is conducive to regional peace and stability.

Secondly, the most pressing task is to address the repatriation of those who fled to Bangladesh. The two countries should adopt effective measures as soon as possible and take substantive steps to repatriate the first group of people.

Thirdly, in accordance with the will of both countries, China stands ready to provide further assistance to improve the living and housing conditions of those fleeing the conflict, including by providing emergency supplies and building the necessary infrastructure.

Fourthly, each side should leverage their respective advantages and strengthen development cooperation in the border areas of the two countries for the well-being of those on the ground. China is now working closely with Myanmar and Bangladesh on implementing the principled common understanding. Ambassador Sun Guoxiang, Special Envoy for Asian Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, made several visits to Myanmar and Bangladesh and, through an in-depth dialogue on the issue, promoted mutual trust between the two sides and called for resolving the issue through bilateral channels. Mr. Sun Guoxiang also briefed members of the Security Council and the Secretariat on his mediation efforts in New York (see S/2018/726).

China supports the work of Special Envoy Burgener, who visited China at the end of June at its invitation and held a frank dialogue with China on resolving the Rakhine issue. China has provided humanitarian material assistance to both Myanmar and Bangladesh to help to improve the living conditions of the displaced people.

The Rakhine issue has complex historical, ethnic and religious contexts. Resolving it requires long-term efforts through a gradual and persistent approach. Given the current situation, the international community should cherish the hard-earned progress, fully understand the great difficulties faced by the countries concerned and continue to provide constructive assistance instead of simply pressuring them. The Rakhine issue should be properly addressed by Myanmar and Bangladesh through bilateral channels. The two countries should continue to resolve developing issues as a result of implementing the repatriation agreement through dialogue. The priority is to start the repatriation process as soon as possible as a first step forward. There should not be any preconditions. Issues such as freedom of movement and citizenship should be resolved gradually during the repatriation process.

UNHCR and UNDP should enhance consultation with the Myanmar Government, overcome technical difficulties, avoid politicization and implement in earnest the tripartite memorandum of understanding. The international community should pay greater attention and help local communities to eradicate poverty in order to promote sustainable development, improve livelihoods and economic and social conditions, and achieve stability and harmonious coexistence among all ethnic groups. That is the fundamental way to resolve issues over the long-term.

China commends UNDP and the World Bank for their efforts to promote local development. We hope that the international community will continue its contribution to the development of Myanmar and Bangladesh. Council members should remain unified. United Nations entities should play their respective roles and improve consultation with Myanmar, Bangladesh and other countries of the region. The international community should remain patient, promote dialogue between Myanmar and Bangladesh, help resolve practical issues and realize long-term peace and stability in Rakhine state.

Mrs. Haley (United States of America): Sir, I welcome you back to New York. We would also like to thank the Secretary-General and Under-Secretary-General Gettu. I also thank Ms. Blanchett for using the power of her voice at a time when the Rohingya have too few voices to fight for them. We thank her for being here.

One year ago this week, unspeakable violence was reaching its peak in Burma. A brutal campaign of ethnic cleansing was under way — one that ultimately resulted in more than 700,000 Rohingya refugees being exiled to camps in Bangladesh. Now, thanks to the support of the United States Department of State, we have an official account of what the refugees witnessed and what they suffered before they were driven from their homes. The results are consistent with the recently released report of the United Nations Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar (A/HRC/39/64). The world can no longer avoid the difficult truth of what happened in Burma. Let me warn everyone listening that the details of the crimes the Rohingya suffered in Burma are stomach-churning, difficult to hear and even more difficult to say. But the facts of the ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya must be said and heard.

The State Department report is eye-opening, even for those of us who have a good understanding of what has occurred in Burma over the past two years. It is based on interviews with 1,024 Rohingya refugees in camps throughout the Cox's Bazar refugee camp. The interviews were conducted by a team of experienced international human rights investigators and the refugees interviewed were randomly selected. In short, the methodology of the report is sound and its conclusions are shocking. The first-hand accounts of the survivors reveal that the majority of the Rohingya directly experienced violence, either to their homes, families or both. Most importantly, the report identifies one group — the Burmese military and security forces — as the perpetrator of the overwhelming majority of the crimes. The numbers tell just part of the story.

Eighty-two per cent of the refugees saw a killing; 82 per cent saw their homes or villages destroyed; 65 per cent witnessed an abduction, arrest or detention of a fellow Rohingya; 64 per cent watched a family member or fellow villager be injured and half of the Rohingya refugees — 51 per cent — said they witnessed sexual violence. I repeat — 51 per cent. Forty-five per cent specifically witnessed a rape and, behind the numbers, there are stories of almost unbelievable brutality. In some areas perpetrators used tactics that resulted in mass casualties, for example locking people in houses to burn them, fencing off entire villages before shooting into the crowd or sinking boats full of hundreds of fleeing Rohingya. Rohingya men, women and children were mutilated, dismembered, decapitated and burned

alive. Infants and children were not spared. Multiple witnesses saw soldiers throwing infants and small children into fires and burning huts, rivers and village wells. The very young, the very old and the sick who could not escape the attacks were burned inside their huts. The military and police went from house to house looking for girls and women. When they found them, they did not bother to hide what they were after. Women and girls were raped in the open, in public. Fully one fifth of all Rohingya who survived witnessed more than 100 victims being killed or injured. Let me repeat that — 20 per cent of the randomly selected survivors of the violence saw a mass-casualty event.

The United States, the United Kingdom, Kuwait, the Netherlands, Peru and others have worked to keep the Security Council's focus on the atrocities in Burma. We have worked to hold the Burmese security forces accountable. Many of us have heard at first hand the accounts of victims. We have seen the sprawling refugee camps and the bulldozed areas where villages once stood. We have seen where innocent human beings were raped, murdered and burned alive for no other reason than their religious and ethnic identity.

Some have stood up to help ease the suffering and provide accountability to Burma. The United States recognizes the generosity of the Government and the people of Bangladesh. They have fed and sheltered nearly 1 million desperate people. Their generosity has saved countless lives. The United States is the largest provider of humanitarian assistance to the Rohingya crisis. We also recognize others who have given generously.

Beyond our humanitarian efforts are important efforts to demand accountability. In June, the European Union and Canada sanctioned seven Burmese military officers for their roles in the violence. Earlier this month, the United States Department of the Treasury sanctioned five Burmese military and border-guard commanders and two units of the Burmese army for their involvement in the ethnic cleansing and other human rights abuses. However, much more must be done. The United Nations must have full and unimpeded access to Burma to deliver humanitarian aid and development assistance. The media must have access to the country, including Rakhine state. A free and responsible press is critical for all democracies. We expect to see Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo, two Reuters journalists facing trial for reporting the violence against the Rohingya, acquitted of all charges when a Burmese court renders its verdict next week.

The difficult path to democracy must continue in Burma and culminate in a military that is subordinate to the civilian Government, not the other way around. Here at the Security Council, we must hold those responsible for violence to account. A responsive, democratic Government that respects the rights of its minorities will not emerge in Burma until the Government demonstrates that it is committed to accountability. We will continue to suffer the shame that our predecessors suffered after Rwanda and Srebrenica if we do not act when the Burmese Government falls short.

In one of his final acts of service, Kofi Annan led the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, which investigated the causes of the crisis in Burma. The Commission recommended equal rights for all Burmese citizens. It called for all Burmese to have opportunity to feed their families. It called for all people of Burma to enjoy freedom of movement and have equal access to justice under the law. The implementation of those recommendations would advance the dignity and security of all Burmese. Until then, none of us — members of the Security Council, the Burmese military, civilian leaders or other world leaders — has the excuse of ignorance. We are now all armed with the devastating eye-witness accounts of the Rohingya, which lead us to the following conclusions.

Children, babies, women and men suffered unspeakable crimes. The attacks were planned, premeditated and coordinated. The perpetrator was the Burmese military and security forces. The whole world is watching what we will do next, and whether we will act.

Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren (Netherlands): I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this very important meeting today. Let me start by thanking the Secretary-General, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Goodwill Ambassador, Ms. Blanchett, and the Associate Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Mr. Gettu, for their strong briefings.

This week marks one year since the report of the Annan Advisory Commission on Rakhine State was issued. Last week, we mourned the passing of Mr. Kofi Annan in the Security Council, and we remembered his legacy. Today, we should honour his legacy by encouraging Myanmar to implement all the

recommendations of the Annan Commission in full. There is no greater tribute than the implementation of the pathway that Mr. Kofi Annan, who cared deeply about Myanmar, provided us for an inclusive future in Rakhine state.

It provided hope for a solution to the complex challenges of Rakhine state — hope that was destroyed by the terrorist attack by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army and the violent response of Myanmar's security forces. They were meant to protect the Rohingya. Instead, they violently chased more than 700,000 women, men and children from their homes to neighbouring Bangladesh, where the Government and people have opened their homes and land to those in need.

One year later, virtually none of the Rohingya refugees has felt safe to return. That has become one of the largest humanitarian crises of the twenty-first century. It is in that sobering reality that we meet today. I will reflect on the following: first, the urgent need for accountability; secondly, the return of the Rohingya people to Myanmar; and thirdly, the Security Council's further engagement.

First, I will speak on accountability. In Kutupalong camp last April, the Council saw the devastating effects of the crisis. I will never forget the large number of persons who had been physically and psychologically wounded. Small children had deep scars on their heads and limbs. They did not play. They did not dream. We met a woman holding a 16-day-old baby. She did not know how to bond with the child. She did not know who the father was. She was raped by Myanmar soldiers on the night her husband was murdered. That was not an isolated incident; sexual violence perpetrated against Rohingya women and girls was used to instil fear in the Rohingya to force them to flee. The effects of those horrendous crimes will last for generations.

Justice is not only a means to ensure that the Rohingya feel safe enough to return voluntarily to their homes in Rakhine state. Ensuring accountability is an end in and of itself. The report of the Human Rights Council Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar (A/HRC/39/64) highlights the need to prosecute crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide and to hold those responsible to account. The shocking findings of the Fact-Finding Mission's report need follow-up and should be included in legal procedures to establish accountability.

The Myanmar authorities announced the formation of a commission of inquiry. While we are encouraged that Myanmar is taking a step towards justice, intentions are meaningful only when followed by concrete steps towards full accountability. It is up to the Myanmar Government to show that it meets those standards. If there is no progress at the national level, the international community has to take responsibility and provide alternatives, and then the Council needs to refer the situation to the International Criminal Court. There can be no impunity.

Secondly, I will address the safe, voluntary, dignified and sustainable return of the Rohingya people to Rakhine state. The memorandum of understanding signed by Myanmar, UNHCR and UNDP was a first step in the right direction, but we have serious concerns about its implementation. If Myanmar is serious about its willingness to let refugees return safely, the best way to show that is by allowing the United Nations unfettered access to northern Rakhine to assist and fulfil its mandate; by addressing the issue of severely restricted freedom of movement for the Rohingya people in Rakhine state; by making sure that internally displaced persons can return to their places of origin; and by offering a credible path to citizenship for those who are entitled to it by law.

Thirdly, I will focus on the Council's engagement. It was in response to a letter from the Secretary-General that the Council decided to give that human tragedy the attention it deserves. We thank the Secretary-General for his leadership and commitment to the Rohingya people from day one. The Council has constructively engaged with the Myanmar authorities both during and following its visit. We have to conclude, however, that this approach has yielded minimal results. I hear a call for patience, but time is pressing.

The international community cannot rely on the generous hospitality of Bangladesh forever. New realities on the ground make it more difficult for people to return to their homes or places of origin. Traces — essential to truth-finding and accountability — are erased. The role of the press is crucial in that regard, as a free press serves the governed instead of the Government. We therefore call for the immediate release of the two Reuters journalists. The Myanmar Government needs to pick up the pace. It needs to create an environment conducive to return and to sustainable peace, as well as ensure accountability. We expect results.

The Security Council will have to continue its engagement, working side by side with other United Nations efforts, including those of the Special Envoy, the Human Rights Council and its Fact-Finding Mission, and funds and programmes to move the situation towards progress. All of us, and Myanmar above all, need to work without delay, using all tools at our disposal, to achieve the same objective — a democratic Myanmar in which all ethnic, minority and religious groups, including the Rohingya, can live together peacefully throughout the territory.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We appreciate the convening of this meeting and the important briefings delivered by Secretary-General António Guterres, Ms. Cate Blanchett in her capacity as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Goodwill Ambassador and Mr. Gettu, Associate Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Peru remains attentive to and deeply concerned over the situation of the Muslim Rohingya population in Rakhine state in Myanmar, as well as the largest refugee camp in the world, established in Cox's Bazar thanks to the solidarity of the Government of Bangladesh, which already hosts more than 900,000 people.

A year has passed since the indiscriminate acts of violence that triggered the mass exodus of hundreds of thousands of people, and it has been four months since the members of the Security Council saw in situ the gravity of the humanitarian situation, the vulnerability of the population and the horror of the atrocities denounced. Peru had the honour of leading the visit of the members of the Council, together with the United Kingdom and Kuwait.

However, we must recognize that the responses that have been made remain insufficient to sustainably resolve the crisis, despite the efforts made by the international community and the initiative of the Secretary-General, who brought the matter to the attention of the Council, exercising, for the first time since 1986, the prerogatives conferred to him by the Charter of the United Nations, as my colleague from the Netherlands mentioned. That is why we must pool our efforts to achieve the voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable repatriation of the Muslim Rohingya people.

The agreements signed by Myanmar, Bangladesh, UNHCR and UNDP and the establishment of a Special Envoy's office in Naypyidaw were steps in the right direction, as is the establishment of the national commission of inquiry. Those arrangements must be translated into results on the ground in terms of access to justice and returnees. We welcome recent meetings aimed at promoting livelihoods and the provision of basic services for returnees. However, we emphasize the urgency of fully implementing the recommendations of the Kofi Annan Advisory Commission on Rakhine State. We take this opportunity to join in the tributes to the former Secretary-General and highlight the validity of his legacy.

We stress the need to address the root causes of the conflict in Rakhine state and the marginalization of Rohingya Muslims as soon as possible, which entails their recognition as citizens and the full exercise of their fundamental rights and freedoms, including freedom of movement, dispelling dehumanizing narratives and overturning discriminatory regulations. It is essential to restore the trust of the Rohingya population by encouraging dialogue among all stakeholders, including the affected population and neighbouring countries, with the support and assistance of the United Nations and the Security Council.

We believe that it is imperative to deploy on the ground mechanisms capable of coordinating and ensuring the short- and long-term conditions required for the return of refugees and, consequently, building sustainable peace. The Myanmar-Bangladesh ministerial meeting held on 10 August is an encouraging sign. We also believe that a transparent, independent and comprehensive accountability process, with jurisdiction over all human rights violations, is essential. Peru is carefully studying the recent report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar of the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/39/64), including its specific recommendations. The atrocities that were committed cannot go unpunished.

Lastly, it is urgent to allow access to northern Rakhine state to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and all independent international actors who can advocate for the forgotten victims — as the Secretary-General called them — so that they have access to justice and so as to ensure the guarantees necessary for the safe return of refugees and displaced persons.

Mr. Ipo (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): Côte d'Ivoire congratulates you, Mr. Minister, on your country's outstanding leadership of the work of the

Security Council, and thanks the British delegation for organizing this important meeting dedicated to the situation in Myanmar. My delegation also thanks Secretary-General António Guterres for his detailed briefing on the situation of the Rohingya people in Myanmar and Bangladesh. Lastly, we thank Under-Secretary-General Tegegnework Gettu, Associate Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, and Ms. Cate Blanchett, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Goodwill Ambassador, for their excellent briefings.

One year since the beginning of the crisis on 25 August 2017, which led to the large-scale displacement of populations, the majority of whom were women and children, the situation in Myanmar — especially with regard to issues concerning Rohingya displaced persons, refugees and human rights in Rakhine state — continues to draw the attention of the international community. Despite the progress made since the Security Council's mission to Myanmar and Bangladesh from 28 April to 1 May, enormous challenges remain with regard to the conditions necessary for the return of Rohingya refugees to their homes and to the complex humanitarian and human rights situation. Côte d'Ivoire remains convinced of the need to work collectively to find a lasting and viable solution to the crisis so as to end the tragedy that the Rohingya populations in Bangladesh and Myanmar are enduring daily.

Moreover, it is important to stress that no lasting solution to this crisis situation will be possible without Myanmar's full involvement. My delegation therefore welcomes the commitment of the Government of Myanmar to working henceforth with the United Nations within the framework of the tripartite memorandum of understanding signed on 6 June, with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Development Programme, and in close cooperation with Ms. Christine Schraner Burgener, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Myanmar. In that regard, my country encourages the Myanmar authorities to work harder towards the re-establishment of trust, which will be the determining factor in ensuring the effective, voluntary return of the Rohingya refugees in safe, dignified and sustainable conditions to their places of origin or to a location of their choice, in accordance with presidential statement S/PRST/2017/22, issued on 6 November 2017. Furthermore, as part of the fulfilment of that commitment, it would be fitting for the Government of Myanmar to consider options to facilitate wider access to the relevant United Nations agencies and their partners, in particular in Rakhine state, so as to enable them to provide humanitarian assistance to those populations in need.

Côte d'Ivoire continues to believe that genuine and sustained cooperation between Bangladesh and Myanmar will contribute effectively to resolving the crisis. In that regard, my country welcomes the signing of an agreement on 10 August between the two countries concerning, inter alia, the repatriation of refugees and the establishment of a direct telephone line linking their Foreign Ministers. My delegation hopes that that new agreement, which is in keeping with the spirit of the bilateral agreement of 23 November 2017, will allow for the voluntary, safe and dignified repatriation of the Rohingya refugees. My country also believes that a lasting solution to the crisis depends on the artful management of its root causes. To that end, Côte d'Ivoire encourages Myanmar to take bold steps to find solutions to core problems.

The issue of the return of the Rohingya displaced persons and refugees also brings to the fore the problem of social cohesion, which must be restored among the various communities living in Myanmar, in particular in Rakhine state. The role of civil society could be decisive to that end. My delegation therefore welcomes the initiative of religious leaders to assume a role with regard to that issue, and supports their work to promote peace and reconciliation within their country's communities. Moreover, my delegation believes that concrete measures should be taken, based on the inclusive economic and social development of Rakhine state, to ensure a decent and sustainable future for refugees and displaced persons, which would encourage their voluntary return. That was the gist of the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, led by the late former Secretary-General Kofi Annan, whose memory we once again honour. The Commission recommended solutions pertaining to the economic development of Rakhine state with a view to ensuring peace and security in the country and to improving the living conditions of all segments of its population.

Undeniably, the fight against impunity is a priority issue with regard to managing the crisis. As the Secretary-General rightly mentioned during his visit to Bangladesh refugee camps on 2 July, the Rohingya refugees are demanding justice with respect to a

situation that is probably "one of the most tragic stories in relation to the systematic violation of human rights".

The information contained in the report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar of the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/39/64), released on 27 August, which sheds light on blatant human rights violations committed by the army and other security forces of Myanmar, is a source of serious concern for the Council. My delegation therefore urges the Government of Myanmar to take urgent measures to ensure that those responsible for human rights violations, in particular those involving women and children, are held accountable. In that regard, the establishment of an independent commission of inquiry to assign responsibility for alleged human rights violations should help meet the challenge of accountability.

In conclusion, I would be remiss were I not to point out the importance of adopting a regional approach to settling this crisis, which remains essential to maintaining peace and security in that part of the world. In that regard, my delegation commends the leadership of the Chinese Government and pays tribute to the Government and the people of Bangladesh for their great generosity. Côte d'Ivoire also calls on the donor community and all relevant actors to provide special support, following the example of the World Bank, for Bangladesh, which, in its 20 July letter to the Security Council, drew the attention of the international community to the possible damage to security that could result from the continued presence of Rohingya refugees within its territory.

Côte d'Ivoire once again calls on the international community to firmly commit to supporting Myanmar in its quest for peace and stability, as well as in its reconstruction efforts.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): I would like to thank the Secretary-General and Mr. Tegegnework Gettu for their detailed briefings and remarks. I also welcome to the Council and thank Ms. Cate Blanchett, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Goodwill Ambassador, for her invaluable remarks.

It has been a year since the most recent outbreak of violence in Rakhine state in Myanmar, which forced more than 700,000 Rohingya to flee to Bangladesh. We remain deeply worried about the humanitarian situation, especially in Rakhine state, where hundreds of thousands of people are waiting for our assistance. Every day lost to bureaucratic deliberations means that we are collectively responsible for human lives that are perishing.

As we welcome the signing of the memorandum of understanding among Myanmar, the United Nations Development Programme and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on assisting in the repatriation and resettlement process, we also urge its full implementation and hope that the Myanmarese authorities will fully cooperate with United Nations agencies. We acknowledge the information about the Myanmarese authorities' granting of access to 23 villages and hope that UNHCR teams will have unlimited and independent access to those pilot project sites.

We continuously urge the Government of Myanmar to step up its efforts to create sustainable conditions conducive to the safe, voluntary and dignified return of Rohingya refugees and internally displaced persons to their homes. We believe that significant steps from the decision-makers in Naypyidaw are needed, as progress on the ground is insufficient. Therefore, we are pleased to hear that further contacts between the relevant ministries of Bangladesh and Myanmar are being established to discuss the implementation of the bilateral agreement signed in November 2017.

We are deeply concerned about the findings of the report (A/HRC/39/64) of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar, which was published yesterday, in particular with regard to violations that might amount to crimes under international law. In that context, let us underline that, in order to stop the recurrence of violence, the issue of impunity and accountability for those crimes needs to be addressed. We call upon the Government in Naypyidaw to cooperate with the Fact-Finding Mission, including by granting access to the country. We furthermore acknowledge the formation of the independent commission of inquiry by the Myanmarese authorities and hope that it will commence a transparent and unbiased investigation of all cases of human rights violations.

I believe that there could not be a better way to commemorate Mr. Kofi Annan than to fully concentrate on the implementation of the recommendations of the Rakhine Advisory Commission, which he chaired, in order to address the root causes of the crisis.

Before I conclude I would like to underline that we are not forgetting that Myanmar is a developing country

with a fragile economy that is prone to natural disasters. A comprehensive approach focused on building the resilience of its society and supporting the State's internal capabilities needs to be further developed. We are aware that rebuilding Rakhine and healing the local communities will be a long process. The international community, after delivering immediate humanitarian aid, should focus on developing a long-term strategy to assist Myanmar in rebuilding and developing Rakhine state and other parts of the country that will require international assistance.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): I would like to thank the Secretary-General for the update on the latest developments in Myanmar and the plight of Rohingya refugees who fled from Rakhine state to Bangladesh exactly one year ago. We are grateful to Cate Blanchett, Goodwill Ambassador of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), for her emotional briefing. We hope that her coming onboard will pave the way for progress towards reconciliation and sustainable peace. We also thank Associate Administrator Gettu for his valuable contribution to the discussion today.

As fate would have it, it is just one year ago that the Rakhine Advisory Commission, led by the late former Secretary-General Kofi Annan, submitted its recommendations. We pay tribute to Mr. Annan and express our sincere hope that the Government of Myanmar will implement all 88 of the Commission's recommendations to bring lasting peace, security and prosperity to Myanmar, including in Rakhine state.

Exactly a year ago, the international community witnessed one of the largest humanitarian and human rights catastrophes, with displacement amounting to the more than 700,000 Rohingya refugees who have fled into Bangladesh since the 25 August 2017 attack against Myanmar security forces, which sparked the current crisis. The report (A/HRC/39/64) of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar gives a full accounting of the status quo.

What is most striking is that 60 per cent of the Rohingya refugees are children who were forced to leave their homes and, as the Security Council members saw for themselves in April in Cox's Bazaar, have had to stay in refugee camps in extremely difficult conditions. Kazakhstan commends the efforts of the United Nations and all humanitarian partners for helping the Rohingya refugees by providing food, shelter, health care and water, among other means of support.

We note some positive measures taken by the Government of Myanmar. We are particularly encouraged by the recent ministerial meeting in Naypyidaw between Myanmar and Bangladesh. The agreement on the speedy repatriation of displaced refugees from Cox's Bazar back to Rakhine and the establishment of a hotline at the ministerial level bode well for some constructive outcomes.

Kazakhstan welcomes the memorandum of understanding signed between the Government of Myanmar and UNHCR and UNDP in June 2018. We hope that United Nations funds and programmes will henceforth have unfettered and safe access to all the areas of Rakhine in order to render emergency assistance. This is the much-awaited access needed to alleviate the present human suffering.

The recently established independent commission of inquiry could be considered one of the key steps towards reconciliation and transitional justice. At the same time, my delegation believes that including a reputable representative of the Muslim community in the commission would have greatly increased its credibility and helped to build bridges.

Kazakhstan welcomes the opening of the office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Myanmar, Ms. Christine Schraner Burgener, in Naypyidaw. We are confident that the positive engagement of the Myanmar authorities with the Special Envoy will further strengthen the cooperation of the Government of Myanmar with the United Nations .

At the same time, there can be no durable and lasting solution for the Rohingya issue without addressing the root causes of the crisis. Key among them are those related to the citizenship and restoration of the rights and freedom of the Rohingyas, poverty alleviation and development. We are still observing severe restrictions on their freedom of movement, as well as restricted access to education, health care and sources of livelihoods for those whom remain in Rakhine state, even today as we speak. It is obvious that only when the Rohingya refugees enjoy security, see tangible progress in the aforementioned areas and witness justice being served with respect to those who have suffered outrageous acts of violence will they start returning to the region.

Although, we completely understand that intercommunal trust cannot be restored overnight, and that it will be a long-running and challenging process, United Nations agencies could be of help if provided the access and conditions necessary for work. Such negotiations, if they are to be successful, demand the active participation of all stakeholders. The delegation of Kazakhstan therefore urges the Government of Myanmar to address all the related issues in depth and make every effort to eliminate the root causes, with the help of the international community. Given the complexity and long-lasting effects of the humanitarian crises in Rakhine state, we appeal to all Member States, international organizations and other actors to continue providing their support and assistance to Bangladesh and Myanmar to overcome the crisis.

We should work patiently and diligently with both sides, as well as other stakeholders, to achieve a tangible result.The Security Council should not only continue to be seized of the situation of the Rohingyas, but also see that it is resolved satisfactorily. My delegation of Kazakhstan is committed to supporting all aspects of multilateral action to find a sustainable solution to the plight of the Rohingya refugees.

Ms. Guadey (Ethiopia): We thank the United Kingdom for organizing this meeting, and we are pleased to see you, Mr. President, presiding over it. I would also like to thank Secretary-General António Guterres for being here with us this afternoon and for his briefing on the security and humanitarian situation in Myanmar. We also welcome United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Associate Administrator Tegegnework Gettu and the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Goodwill Ambassador Cate Blanchett, and we appreciate their useful briefings.

It is evident that efforts have been undertaken by the Government of Myanmar to try to address the situation in Rakhine state following the visit of the Security Council and the follow-up engagements. Certainly, more needs to be done with regard to the humanitarian situation, accountability measures on alleged human right violations and implementation of the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, as well as in many other areas, to bring lasting peace and reconciliation to Myanmar.

The memorandum of understanding signed by the Government of Myanmar and two United Nations agencies, UNHCR and UNDP, on 6 June, is a step in the right direction that we hope will facilitate conditions for the safe, voluntary, sustainable and dignified repatriation of refugees. It is indeed vital to ensure the swift and full implementation of that agreement.

The Council's visit to Myanmar and Bangladesh last May provided the opportunity to witness the condition of the refugee camps, which continues to be a matter of serious concern. Therefore, we underline the need to address the worsening humanitarian situation and the suffering of those who have fled, particularly women and children.

Despite the devastating humanitarian situation, the efforts undertaken by the Government of Bangladesh to provide safety and humanitarian assistance to refugees are highly commendable. However, the magnitude and scale of devastation necessitate further financial and logistical support to Bangladesh, the United Nations and the other humanitarian partners that are engaged in this effort.

Of course, the complex challenges that Rakhine state is facing need a political solution, which requires a comprehensive strategy aimed at addressing the root causes of the crisis through reconciliation, peace, stability and development. In that vein, the rapid and effective implementation of the recommendations of the Advisory Commission remains absolutely vital.

We underscore the need for a transparent and independent investigation mechanism to ensure accountability for the alleged human right violations. To that end, we note the initiative undertaken by the Government of Myanmar to establish an independent commission of inquiry that also comprises international personalities. In that regard, we stress the need to expedite the process in order to ensure reconciliation, peace and stability in Rakhine state.

The bilateral engagement between Bangladesh and Myanmar remains very important to ensuring the safe, voluntary and dignified return of refugees. It is in that context that we took positive note of the recent Myanmar-Bangladesh ministerial meeting, held on 10 August. We encourage both Governments to expedite the implementation of the agreed memorandum of understanding.

It is also important that the Council continue to maintain its unity and enhance its cooperation with the Governments of Myanmar and Bangladesh, as well as regional and subregional organizations in addressing

the situation. We support and encourage the Special Envoy's engagement with the Government of Myanmar and other relevant stakeholders, which aims to build confidence and mutual trust to pave the way for greater cooperation in resolving the situation in Rakhine state.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting, and we welcome the fact that you are presiding it.

We express our deep appreciation for the presence of Secretary-General António Guterres and for his valuable briefing. His presence today is a clear indication of what this humanitarian issue means to him, Security Council members and the international community as a whole. We highly value his tremendous efforts pertaining to the crisis of the Rohingya minority refugees, and we emphasize our full support for his noble endeavours.

I would also like to thank Mr. Gettu of the United Nations Development Programme and Ms. Cate Blanchett, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Goodwill Ambassador, for their valuable briefings.

August marks one year since the start of violence in Rakhine state in Myanmar. That violence has led to the displacement of more than 800,000 people of the Rohingya minority to Bangladesh, according to statistics published by UNHCR, bringing the total number of Rohingya refugees in the biggest refugee camps in the world to 1.1 million.

Today's meeting comes one day after the issuance of the report (A/HRC/39/64) of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar, which documented crimes that amount to genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity in Myanmar. The report confirms the conclusions reached by many international organizations regarding those crimes, and is consistent with what we witnessed during Security Council visits to Rakhine and what we heard from eyewitnesses to those crimes during our meetings with Rohingya refugees in the camps of Cox's Bazar.

The world is following the proceedings of our Security Council meeting today and expects nothing less from us than to maintain our moral and humanitarian stance and to rise above all political considerations in dealing with one of the worst catastrophes in modern history — a catastrophe that the Rohingya minority, subjected to killings and torture, are still suffering as a result of their oppression and forced displacement. Such events can only be described as ethnic cleansing, aimed at erasing their culture and wiping out their identity.

Since the Security Council visit to Bangladesh and Myanmar in April, we note some of the initial steps taken by the Government of Myanmar towards resolving the humanitarian crisis. Meetings among officials in both Bangladesh and Myanmar, the signing of a memorandum of understanding and the establishment of a body to investigate violations of human rights are all good, albeit limited steps, the majority of which are yet to be implemented on the ground.

The demands identified by the Security Council in its presidential statement (S/PRST/2017/22) and the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, led by Kofi Annan, are clear and concrete, aimed at resolving the root causes of the crisis, ending the suffering of the refugees and ensuring their voluntary return in a peaceful and dignified manner to their original homes in Myanmar. Such a voluntary return cannot begin without taking a series of confidence-building measures to ensure a safe return and dignified life in Rakhine state.

I recall some of the measures that should be taken prior to the voluntary return of refugees: undertaking an independent and transparent investigation into the crimes and other transgressions committed against the Rohingya minority in Rakhine state; the Government of Myanmar's taking all measures to guarantee the immediate cessation of violence and ethnic discrimination and to ban the excessive use of force in violation of the rights of civilians in Rakhine state; closing all internally displaced persons camps; the Government of Myanmar's taking all the necessary measures against incitement of violence and hatred in order to ensure peace and harmony among all communities, under the rule of law; granting permission for all United Nations agencies and other partners to freely enter Rakhine state and ensure their freedom of movement safely and without impediments; the elimination of all root causes of the crisis of the Rohingya minority, without discrimination and regardless of ethnicity or religion, while granting their inherent right to citizenship, as stressed in General Assembly resolution 70/233; and undertaking comprehensive social and economic reforms accompanied by eliminating the root causes of the crisis of the Rohingya refugees.

The humanitarian tragedy of the Rohingya refugees compels the international community to redouble its efforts towards alleviating their daily suffering. As we hold our meeting today, refugee camps are facing the challenges of monsoons, rains and floods, which have led to the collapse of some sites, due to hurricanes and mudslides.

In closing, paragraph 3 of Article 1, Chapter I of the Charter of the United Nations stresses the importance of achieving international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion. There should be no discrimination between men and women. That is the Charter that we, the peoples of the world, have pledged to observe with a view to saving future generations from the scourge of war; the Charter that determines the course of future generations; the Charter that joins us in unity to face all issues threatening international peace and security; and the Charter that compels us to rise above our political differences for the sake of protecting the vulnerable and seeking final solution for their predicaments. Among those individuals are the refugees from Rakhine state with whom we met in Cox's Bazar and listened to their concerns and suffering. Those refugees implored us not to forget their demands after we left their camps.

Mrs. Mele Colifa (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, my delegation would like to thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his clear and detailed briefing. We also thank Mr. Tegegnework Gettu, Associate Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, and Ms. Cate Blanchett, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Goodwill Ambassador, for her valuable and moving presentation.

Following the mass exodus that occurred in August last year, in which more than 700,000 Rohingyas were forced to flee Myanmar to Bangladesh, my delegation has paid particular attention to the situation of the refugees from that minority ethnic group, who have remained in vulnerable conditions in Bangladesh community centres for a year. We commend the efforts of the Government of Bangladesh and its people, with the assistance of the United Nations, its partners and other non-governmental organizations, in providing security, shelter and humanitarian assistance to all individuals who have fled the violence, and we encourage them to continue doing so until those people can return voluntarily, safely and with dignity to their homes in Myanmar.

Within the framework of efforts to address the crisis, a working delegation comprised of Council members visited Bangladesh and Myanmar in April and May, where it visited specific locations and had the opportunity to talk with governmental and military authorities and officials at various levels. Subsequently, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Myanmar, Ms. Burgener, travelled to the area in June and July, having visited Rakhine and held meetings with Myanmar authorities. As part of that sequence of visits, of particular note was the visit in early July of the delegation led by Secretary-General António Guterres, who arrived in Cox's Bazar and met with the Prime Minister of Bangladesh.

Equatorial Guinea commends the reception and assistance that the authorities of both countries and United Nations agencies gave to all the delegations to facilitate their work. However, we also share the various concerns about the situation of refugees in community centres, as well as the setbacks that have so far prevented a large-scale voluntary and safe return that is backed by a political settlement guaranteeing the rights of the Rohingyas in Myanmar. In that regard, we call on the Government of Myanmar to redouble its efforts to create conditions conducive to the safe, voluntary and dignified return of Rohingya refugees and internally displaced persons to their homes in Rakhine.

Nonetheless, my delegation welcomes several aspects clarified in a letter dated 27 June, addressed to the President of the Council from the Permanent Representative of Myanmar, including: the implementation of the Mechanism of the Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development in Rakhine, in order to provide humanitarian assistance to all communities in need and coordinate such assistance; the signing of a memorandum of understanding by the Government of Myanmar, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Development Programme on 6 June, paving the way not only for assistance at the various stages of return and resettlement in the repatriation process, but also for an improvement in humanitarian assistance and livelihood opportunities for returnees, as well as for all communities in Rakhine state; the Government's

declaration that it does not accept any violation of human rights and will take action against any perpetrator in accordance with the law, provided that the accusations are supported by sufficient evidence; and the public commitment of the Government of Myanmar to implementing the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, as well as establishing a ministerial-level commission to implement the recommendations.

Finally, in view of those assertions, I would like to conclude by encouraging all members of the Council and the international community to continue their constructive role in creating the external conditions necessary to facilitate consultations and dialogue that can help the Myanmar Government to find a solution to this situation.

Mrs. Cordova Soria (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his briefing, and we take this opportunity to reaffirm our greatest support for his important work. We also appreciate the briefing delivered by the Associate Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, Mr. Tegegnework Gettu, and thank the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Goodwill Ambassador, Ms. Cate Blanchett.

One year after the acts of violence that occurred in Rakhine state, my delegation reiterates its condemnation of and deep concern for the aftermath that those events continue to generate, which has resulted in the displacement of nearly 900,000 Rohingya people to Bangladesh. Without doubt, those acts of violence cannot go unpunished; my delegation therefore reiterates that they must be duly investigated, and those responsible identified and brought to justice to answer for their actions before the appropriate courts. Impunity is unacceptable and runs counter to the main objective and work of achieving reconciliation in the country and in Rakhine state.

We highlight the creation of an independent commission of inquiry in late July to investigate all human rights violations committed since August 2017. We also highlight the efforts of the Government of Myanmar towards the commission's establishment, particularly the definition of its programme of work and the formation of a specialized secretariat to assist the commission therein. In that regard, we call on all agencies and institutions of the Government of Myanmar to collaborate with the commission's investigations, particularly in the collection of data and information and in obtaining testimonies. We hope that the work of the commission will be conducted under the principles of independence, impartiality, objectivity, transparency, integrity and professionalism.

Moreover, in order to prevent similar events from happening again, it is imperative that the Government of Myanmar focus on preventing hate speech, segregation and persecution from spreading; it must instead promote dialogue, mediation and negotiation to guarantee the security and physical integrity of all its inhabitants, without any racial, ethnic or religious distinction.

It is also important that the Government of Myanmar analyse the root causes of the crisis and fully comply with the recommendations made by the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, which provides a clear road map for the peaceful resolution of this sensitive situation, especially regarding the issue of citizenship, sustainable development of the Rohingya population and respect for the rights of that population. In the same vein, we must continue to work diligently and show greater progress in our efforts towards the dignified, informed and voluntary return of the refugees and internally displaced persons of Rakhine state. With that in mind, we highlight the establishment of a ministerial committee for that purpose and an advisory board to follow up on the activities carried out by the committee.

We welcome the coordination and technical work carried out by the Government of Myanmar, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Development Programme to implement the memorandum of understanding signed on 6 June. We also note that the agreed plan of work includes initiatives for promoting sustainable socioeconomic development, improving health services and education and creating conditions to strengthen peaceful coexistence among the communities of northern Rakhine state. We hope that the implementation of the memorandum of understanding will constitute an effective tool for resolving the situation of refugees and internally displaced persons.

We welcome the increased coordination and cooperation among humanitarian agencies and bodies for the deployment and provision of humanitarian assistance. In particular, we highlight the increase in activity from the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Food Programme and the

Association of Southeast Asian Nations Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management. We note the willingness and openness shown by the Government of Myanmar to work with the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to find the best ways to deal with the problems and challenges the country is facing. In that regard, we highlight the agreement to open an office of the Special Envoy in the city of Naypyidaw.

We are also concerned that, according to the operational update of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees of 19 July, more than 11,000 people have continued to enter Bangladesh since the beginning of this year, escaping persecution and a lack of security. That is an issue that must be urgently addressed by the Government of Myanmar. However, urgent needs must also be addressed in Bangladesh, including assistance to mothers who have given birth in refugee camps; the need to improve food distribution and humanitarian assistance, while ensuring the receiving communities are impacted as little as possible; and access to water and sanitation to avoid an outbreak of diseases such as diphtheria, from which 8,000 people are suffering, according to the World Health Organization.

My delegation recognizes and commends the efforts that the Government of Bangladesh has been making over the past year regarding the refugees in its country. With that in mind, it is imperative that the international community and the United Nations do everything in their power to support the host communities in Bangladesh, particularly in the short term, taking into account that the monsoon season may have a devastating impact on the Rohingya population in the Cox's Bazar camps.

Finally, it is important to point out and reiterate that Bangladesh is not responsible for what happened in Myanmar. It has welcomed the Rohingya refugees selflessly and therefore needs the full support of the international community and incentives for its development in the short, medium and long term, since the unexpected influx of more than 900,000 refugees is significantly affecting Bangladesh's economy, politics and society. The Government and the people of Bangladesh should receive the full support of the United Nations, international funding bodies and subregional and regional actors and mechanisms to be able to continue its collaboration until the safe return of refugees and displaced persons can be guaranteed.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Myanmar.

Mr. Suan (Myanmar): I would like to congratulate you, Madam President, for presiding over this important meeting and for the United Kingdom's successful presidency of the Security Council this month.

At the outset, please allow me to pay tribute to the late Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General of the United Nations, who contributed tremendously towards our efforts to find lasting solutions to the problems that were jeopardizing peace and progress in Rakhine state. When he took on the responsibility of leading the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, at the request of State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, he wanted Myanmar to succeed and reach its goals of peace, prosperity, security and progress. The Commission's recommendations are welcomed by all as important steps for lasting peace and development in Rakhine state. The people of Myanmar will always be grateful for his invaluable support and wise counsel in the country's democratic transition. We should all learn from his way of solving conflicts in a peaceful manner with a constructive and caring approach.

Addressing the deep-rooted and complex issues in Rakhine state was a fundamental and crucial part of Myanmar Government's efforts in building peace and national reconciliation in the country. In May 2016, just two months after taking on State responsibility, the Government established the Central Committee for the Implementation of Peace, Stability and Development in Rakhine State. Soon after, on 5 September, the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, headed by Mr. Annan, was established. The Commission was mandated to examine the complex challenges facing Rakhine state and to propose responses to those challenges.

Barely a month later, on 9 October 2016, a religious extremist terrorist group called Aqa Mul Mujahidin, later known as the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), launched its first attack on three border police posts in northern Rakhine state. The attack was premeditated and well organized, causing the deaths of 13 security personnel and other civilians. Their goal was clear — to incite violence and attract international attention of the issue at a time when the whole world was welcoming our peaceful democratic transition.

On 24 August 2017, the Rakhine Advisory Commission presented its final report to the Government of Myanmar. The 88 recommendations are aimed at

establishing lasting peace and stability in Rakhine state. The challenges are daunting, multi-faceted and require multitasking, but we welcomed the report and decided to carry on the task of implementing the recommendations in good faith to the fullest extent, within the shortest time frame possible, and consonant with the situation on the ground.

Then, in the early hours of 25 August 2017, just a few hours after Mr. Annan submitted his final report, ARSA launched premeditated, well-planned and coordinated simultaneous armed attacks on 30 border guard posts and one army battalion headquarters in northern Rakhine. The attacks caused the deaths of dozens of security personnel and many innocent civilians. ARSA has also brutally killed more than 250 non-Muslim ethnic minorities in northern Rakhine since October 2016. On the same day that ARSA attacked the security posts they massacred 100 Hindus, which was well documented. The ARSA attacks triggered a predictable and logical response from Myanmar security forces to protect the life and property of every citizen, resulting in the subsequent mass displacement of people. Those are plain facts and nothing but the truth, but they were conveniently discounted or ignored by mainstream media.

The violent attacks were not coincidence. ARSA terrorists and their foreign masterminds knew all too well that the Myanmar security forces would respond to their attacks with full force. They must also have anticipated the exodus of people from northern Rakhine to Bangladesh. Those events were well planned and executed with the support of foreign terrorist organizations.

The present grave humanitarian problems and the untold suffering of the innocent civilian people of all communities in Rakhine state were carefully calculated, instigated and created by ARSA. Their objective was to undermine the Myanmar Government's commitment and efforts to find lasting solution through the speedy implementation of the Commission's recommendations and to elicit maximum international pressure on Myanmar to achieve their political goals.

Our gathering here today could have been a different one had there been no terrorist attacks. It could have been a happier occasion of stock-taking on the implementation of the Rakhine Advisory Commission recommendations, or an international pledging conference to help with poverty alleviation and socioeconomic development on behalf of all communities in Rakhine. The provocative terrorist attacks of October 2016 and August 2017 have affected the course of our earnest endeavour to build a peaceful, fair and prosperous future for the people of Rakhine. But nothing shall stop our determination to continue our efforts to achieve our objectives.

We share deep sympathy and concern for all displaced persons, especially women and children. We believe that we will be able to solve the issue with our neighbour Bangladesh if we work together amicably in the spirit of good-neighbourliness. We have reached out to Bangladesh by sending ministerial delegations. We invited Bangladesh's Foreign Minister, Mr. Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali, to Myanmar early this month. Among other things, during his visit the two sides agreed to deliver on the commitments made, to speed up the implementation of bilateral agreements on repatriation and to set up a hotline between the two countries at the ministerial level. In the course of the two months between November 2017 and January 2018, we signed three documents with Bangladesh to facilitate the repatriation of verified persons who crossed over to Bangladesh following the ARSA terrorist attacks in October 2016 and August 2017. According to the agreement on physical arrangements for repatriation, the process of repatriation was scheduled to have commenced on 23 January 2018.

In line with those bilateral agreements, Myanmar made arrangements with momentum for the repatriation of verified displaced persons. We have been ready to receive the first batch of verified returnees since 23 January. In February, Bangladesh provided us with a list of 8,032 people — without signatures, finger prints, proper photographs or, more important, the proper forms agreed by the two sides. Despite difficulties in verification owing to a lack of adequate information, we managed to verify 3,952 returnees as of 23 August 2018. We are also ready to receive those on a list of over 1,200 verified Hindus and Muslims that we shared with Bangladesh. But we have yet to receive a single returnee despite our repeated requests for their repatriation. We call on Bangladesh to fulfil its obligations in accordance with the bilateral agreements so as to allow without delay the return of verified persons who consented to return to Rakhine voluntarily.

Another important issue is the systematic repatriation of displaced persons staying on the border line. Since occupying the area 150 feet from

the international border line is unlawful, those people put themselves unwittingly in a situation that can affect the stability of the two bordering countries. It is highly possible that the areas could become an ARSA terrorist foothold. In that regard, we have requested the Bangladesh authorities not to provide them any assistance from their side of the border, instead we are now arranging to provide humanitarian assistance for them from the Myanmar side.

Moreover, the Government of Myanmar also signed a memorandum of understanding with the United Nations Development Programme and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to assist with speedy and efficient resettlement and rehabilitation of the returnees. We have already mapped out potential resettlement sites. On 7 August, United Nations officials were granted access to 23 villages in 13 village tracts selected for the first phase of the assessment programme. An additional three village tracts have been marked out for the resettlement of internally displaced persons residing near the border line. We urge the United Nations team to start the assessment programme as soon as possible.

The Government continues to implement the recommendations of the Rakhine Advisory Commission in earnest. Eighty-one out of the 88 recommendations have been implemented or are under implementation. In the process of implementation, the Government attaches great importance to the advice and opinion of the advisory board, chaired by Mr. Surakiart Sathirathai, former Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand. The advisory board submitted its final report on 16 August. The report contained balanced and viable final recommendations, which will certainly receive our serious attention.

We recognize the crucial role of the United Nations in addressing the issue of Rakhine, and the present humanitarian crisis in particular. Last April, we facilitated the visit by members of the Security Council, representatives of neighbouring countries and the Chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. We welcomed the appointment of Ambassador Christine Schraner Burgener as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General. We believe that we could maintain a constructive and fruitful relationship with the Special Envoy. We have facilitated the opening of her office in Naypyidaw.

Let me now turn to the question of accountability. The Government of Myanmar has made its position very clear that it will not condone any human rights abuses. Action will be taken against anyone if there is sufficient evidence. In that regard, the Government has established an independent commission of inquiry, led by Ambassador Rosario Manalo, an eminent diplomat with rich experience in the field of human rights. The Commission also includes Ambassador Kenzo Oshima, another prominent diplomat, and two highly respected members from Myanmar.

The Commission is tasked with investigating allegations of human rights violations and related issues following the terrorist attacks on 9 October 2016 and 25 August 2017, with a view to seeking accountability and reconciliation, as well as formulating recommendations on steps to be taken to ensure peace and stability in Rakhine state. The Commission will submit its report to the President of Myanmar within a year, including its recommendations prepared on the basis of the outcomes of its investigation.

In discharging its mandate, the Commission will apply in particular the 1950 Investigation Committee Act, which gives the Commission the necessary authority to investigate. The Commission will also avail itself of international human rights law and international humanitarian law where applicable. The Government of Myanmar will provide protection to all those who are in contact with the Commission, particularly victims and witnesses. The Commission will conduct its mandate while observing the principles of independence, impartiality and objectivity. The members met for the first time on 15 August. The Commission will commence its work this week.

With regard to the allegations of atrocity crimes committed by Myanmar security forces, as set out in the recent report (A/HCR/39/64) of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar, I would like to reiterate that we did not accept the mandate of the Mission because we have concerns about its impartiality. Besides, I have serious doubts as to the intention behind the timing of the release of the report. The report, which was scheduled to be submitted only to the Human Rights Council on 18 September, was hastily released on the eve of this particular meeting of the Security Council. This action raises serious questions about the objectivity, impartiality and sincerity of the Fact-Finding Mission.

The challenges we are facing today in Rakhine state are formidable. However, the Government and people of Myanmar are united in our determination to achieve sustainable peace and development for all communities in Rakhine. We shall not let these challenges derail our ultimate goal of democratic nation-building. It will take time and patience to build trust and confidence among communities. We shall seek reconciliation but not retribution; compassion but not hatred; integration but not segregation.

While the primary responsibility to address the situation in Rakhine rests with the Government and people of Myanmar, the objective, positive and constructive contribution and support of the international community will be crucial to the success of Myanmar's national efforts. This is not the time to exploit the plight of innocent people, particularly women and children, from Rakhine for reasons of self-interest and political grandstanding. This is the time to act and to show our genuine concern by taking practical steps. Let the first batch of verified people who have expressed their interests in voluntary return go back to their land. Let the first phase of the assessment programme commence where access has been granted. Let us not waste our time.

In conclusion, I wish to express our sincere appreciation to all our friends who are helping us in various ways to resolve the challenges in Rakhine at this critical juncture of democratic transition. We should make important policy decisions based on facts and full understanding of the issues at hand. We should view this complex issue from a broader perspective.

We shall continue to work in good faith with the United Nations and with all our friends near and far to end the suffering of the people of Rakhine and rebuild their land so that all shall enjoy the fruits of peace and prosperity in a land blessed with so much resources and potential.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Bangladesh.

Mr. Bin Momen (Bangladesh): We deeply appreciate the United Kingdom presidency's initiative to organize this open briefing on the situation in Myanmar. The United Kingdom's consistent lead on this issue in the Council has been a source of moral strength for the millions of Rohingya and others affected by this humanitarian crisis.

The eloquent testimonies we heard from the Secretary-General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Goodwill Ambassador, Ms. Cate Blanchett leave nothing much to be added. Every passing week, there is new information emerging about the extent of the persecution and dehumanization the Rohingya had been subjected to, and about the possible ramifications of keeping the crisis unresolved for long.

We take a moment to express our gratitude to each one of the world leaders, United Nations representatives and personnel, representatives of the media, civil society and academia, and conscientious global citizens for their unstinting solidarity, support and advocacy for what has turned out to be one of the largest displacement crises in our world today.

"One year of crying. Now I am angry", read one of the banners carried by the Rohingya men, women and children who gathered at their camps in Cox's Bazar to mark the passage of one long, arduous year since they had been forcibly displaced from their homes across the border. Their grief and anger have many manifestations, and we have just heard some of their echoes in the Chamber. The Human Rights Council's Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar released its report yesterday (A/HRC/39/64), and it is evident what caused such pervasive grief and anger among the forcibly displaced Rohingya. In no uncertain words, the Fact-finding Mission concludes that it was all caused in a premeditated and organized manner, and that the perpetrators had acted with a "genocidal intent". These findings largely echo those shared earlier by, among others, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, the Special Advisers of the Secretary-General on Prevention of Genocide and Responsibility to Protect, and a host of other independent entities.

With such conclusions at hand, the Security Council's custodianship of the issue remains all the more relevant and pressing. The Council has adopted presidential statement (S/PRST/2017/22), visited the affected people in Bangladesh and Myanmar, and continued to engage with a host of actors, including the Secretary-General's Special Envoy on Myanmar. Despite odds and obstacles, the Council has kept the issue alive and generally managed to speak in a unified voice in support of addressing the root causes of the crisis. As a party directly affected, Bangladesh recognizes the Council's efforts and calls for further calibrating

its response in light of the prevailing circumstances on the ground and the emerging evidence into the atrocity crimes committed against the Rohingya.

The five-point agenda presented by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to the General Assembly last year (see A/72/PV.14) essentially captures our expectations of the United Nations and the international community, and forms the basis of our engagements going forwards. A high-powered national task force continues to remain functional for overall policy orientation and coordination.

In the immediate aftermath of the crisis, we had to invest our resources and energy in a massive humanitarian response starting with immediate life-saving assistance. Thanks to the overwhelming support of our people and our many friends and partners from home and abroad, the humanitarian situation in the sprawling camps in Cox's Bazar has largely stabilized. It has been a relief for all concerned to have been able to avert the worst possible impact of the ongoing monsoon. There continues to be a small-scale influx of people from the other side of border, citing lack of access to food and security in northern Rakhine state.

It remains crucial for the forcibly displaced people and the much-stressed host communities to have the international community's enhanced and sustainable support for the United Nations response plan for the Rohingya humanitarian crisis. Pending their voluntary repatriation to Rakhine state, the Rohingya camped in Bangladesh need to have improved shelter, health care, livelihood and education options in the short to medium terms. Our authorities remain sensitized to some of the security and law and order issues in the camps, and continue to work with the Rohingya themselves to strengthen community-based interventions and safeguards. We urge continued vigilance and cooperation on the part of Member States of the region to help mitigate potential security risks, including those posed by transnational actors.

On the overriding priority of the voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable repatriation of the Rohingya, we have concluded enabling agreements and arrangements with Myanmar, and have already had a series of meetings of the joint working groups to identify and address some of the operational and technical challenges to implementing the agreed provisions. As far as Bangladesh is concerned, the initial steps towards repatriation have already been set in motion with the handing over of a short list of potential returnees to the Myanmar side in February. We are currently in the process of setting up transit infrastructure on our side, as envisaged in the agreements, and constituting a technical committee to oversee implementation in coordination with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other relevant entities.

It must be made clear, however, that the return of the Rohingya cannot be begun unless the Rohingya themselves regain the trust and confidence to voluntarily opt for repatriation. The Secretary-General and several representatives have already spoken at length about the prerequisites on the ground for creating an environment conducive to their repatriation. It is well documented that the Rohingya would, at the minimum, seek guarantees for their safety and security, return to their homes and property, freedom of movement, livelihood opportunities, and a clear pathway to their legitimate demand for citizenship in Myanmar. It will be entirely up to the Myanmar authorities to build trust among the Rohingya about their sustainable return and peaceful coexistence with other communities in the Rakhine State.

During his visit to Myanmar earlier this month, our Foreign Minister noted the Myanmar leadership's commitment across the board to facilitating the Rohingya's return to Rakhine state. He was briefed by some on the measures being contemplated for the accommodation and livelihoods of the Rohingya, and visited the physical infrastructure built so far, with the support of some friendly countries of the region. He invited Myanmar to send a delegation to Bangladesh to brief the Rohingya first-hand about the arrangements being made, and to give them assurances about their safe and dignified return so that they can feel encouraged to voluntarily put their signatures and fingerprints on the agreed verification forms.

Meanwhile, as the Secretary-General and others have mentioned, the Myanmar authorities can consider a number of demonstrable measures that can evoke confidence about an enabling situation on the ground. These include, first, allowing unimpeded access to the United Nations Development Programme and UNHCR to all the affected villages and townships in Rakhine State for necessary humanitarian and development work, as reportedly envisaged in the memorandum of understanding concluded with Myanmar; secondly,

managing the safe and sustainable return of the Rohingya stranded along the border between Bangladesh and Myanmar and, pending their return, providing humanitarian assistance to them from the Myanmar side; thirdly, dismantling the camps for internally displaced persons in Rakhine state in a way that would allow the people confined therein to sustainably return to their homes or other places of choice, with their rights and freedoms restored; and fourthly, promoting reconciliation and trust among communities in Rakhine State, and curbing the malicious spread of hate speech and incitement to violence.

Most importantly, the question of accountability deserves to be addressed in the right earnest. The culture of impunity for the alleged crimes committed against the Rohingya must be brought to a close to heal their trauma and restore a sense of justice. The commission of inquiry formed by Myanmar recently should be allowed to act independently and factor in the observations made by the Fact-finding Mission. The international community, including the Council, has certain specific options and responsibilities outlined in the Mission's report, and should give them due consideration.

As a Member State committed to international criminal justice, and as a State party to the Rome Statute and other relevant international instruments, Bangladesh will continue to cooperate with various international processes and initiatives on the accountability issue. At the same time, Bangladesh stands ready to cooperate with Myanmar on any of its security concerns and other issues of strategic interest in the spirit of good-neighbourliness.

Over the past year, the international community has not allowed its concerns over the Rohingya humanitarian issue to run its course and die down. The Security Council could help sustain the momentum by adopting a much-anticipated resolution that would allow the issue to be featured on its regular agenda. The General Assembly, at the initiative of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, adopted resolution 72/248, on the situation in Myanmar, last year; it needs to be updated this year, not least in the interest of continuing the mandate of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy. We look forward to Member States' principled support for these initiatives.

The outbreak of violence in northern Rakhine State coincided with the release of the groundbreaking report of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, headed by Mr. Kofi Annan. With Mr. Annan's sad demise, the Rohingya have indeed lost one of their key allies and guardians — a voice that articulated their aspirations and charted a way forward in addressing the root causes of a complex situation. We must do justice to Mr. Annan's memory and contributions by lending our continued support to Myanmar in order to ensure the full, unconditional and non-selective implementation of all the recommendations he presented to the Myanmar leadership.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.